



**MONARCHS TRACK AND FIELD TEAM
LOOK TO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP.**

SEE PAGE 6

lavalleystar.com

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ARBOR DAY



CRAYFISH - Enrique Aniseta teaching Arbor Day Festival goers of the ecological dangers linked with releasing classroom-studied crayfish into the wild.

JOHN STRUBE | VALLEY STAR

BILL PROPOSES MORE CLASSES AT HIGHER PRICE

California community college students may have to pay more tuition for summer and winter sessions.

DEZIREE MILLER
VALLEYLIFE EDITOR

California community college students may have more course offerings if they can afford to pay the full price for tuition.

A new piece of legislation is being proposed that would widen the number of courses available to the state's community college students but at a higher cost than the current \$46-per-unit price.

Assembly Bill 955 would allow California community colleges to offer an extension program in their winter and summer sessions, which would include courses that would earn credit toward a certificate, associate's degree or to transfer to a four-year university. This could include classes being applied toward general education and major requirements.

"The Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees has taken a position to oppose AB 955," said Valley College President Sue Carleo. "This bill would require a higher fee, which raises equity issues for our students. So, our board consistently objects to differential fees, which may facilitate access but do so in an inequitable manner."

Bill 955 is similar to a plan that Santa Monica College attempted to pass last summer when the school wanted to charge students \$180 a unit for English, math and history classes.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the author of the bill, assemblymember Das Williams (D-Santa Barbara), said he proposed the idea because colleges in California are still suffering from decreased state funding that has lead schools to offer fewer courses and for some to drop summer and winter sessions.

"Our intent is to help students be able to get classes," Williams told the L.A. Times. "Everyone advocates for access, but I'm disappointed that no one supports any ideas. This is a modest attempt that is voluntary on the part of students and community colleges. Opponents of the bill should not be able to make decisions for every community college student in the state."

The Board of Governor's Fee Waivers and Cal Grants cannot be applied to extension programs. Students would have to pay for these courses using money from their own income to attend classes if others they need are already full.

Some schools have decided to support this legislation. The president of Long Beach City College, Eloy Oakley, has expressed his support explaining his hope that this type of program could alleviate long waiting lists for intersessions. However, student reaction is mixed.

"Adding new classes is pointless if most students won't be able to afford them," said Christina Vega, a theater major at Valley. "It's not fair that only some students can take them."

The measure, which is in its early stages, will be discussed in a May 1 hearing by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

CONSTRUCTION FOR NEW COMMUNITY CENTER BEGINS

Parking Lot E will be closed off for the construction of the new Community Service Center.

WALEED RAHMAN
STAFF WRITER

Valley College has started its new construction project for a new Community Service Center on the corner of Ethel Avenue and Hatteras Street, formerly known as parking Lot E.

"There will be some impact on parking," said Abraham Garcia Salcedo, the project manager. "But in the end, [students] will be more than accommodated."

As of April 14, parking Lot E has been closed in anticipation for the construction of a new athletic practice field, updated ticket booth at Monarch Stadium, a new parking lot, a Community Service Center and an alumni walk. Students have been asked to park in lots G and F until construction is completed.

"[Students] either can look at it [having to park far away] or getting a four story structure in the heart of the campus, bringing everyone closer," said athletic director Jim Fenwick. "While it is an inconvenience, it is worth it."

The construction is scheduled to be completed around September 2014. Construction at Valley, however, has been hampered in the past due to water wells from when the surrounding area was farm land.

The new Community Service

Center will house two multi-purpose rooms, including rooms for yoga and dance, a computer room, a large classroom and a rock wall. The new athletic practice field will be located where Lot L, the tennis courts, the Field House, the weight room and bungalow 78 are currently located.

Students have mixed feeling about the project.

"Parking is going to suck, especially when they close Lot L," said Francis Tapia, an undecided major. "Although, the rock wall alone makes it worth it."

In addition to the center, the Monarch Stadium ticket booth will be remodeled and an alumni walk will be built in which graduating students will pass between the South Gym and the swimming pools leading to Monarch Stadium. Intended as an area for students to relax between classes, it will feature benches and trees. It will also serve as the path students walk down on graduation day every year.

The project breaks ground May 7 at 5 p.m., and students are welcome to attend the ceremony.

VALLEY COLLEGE FUNDRAISES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Valley College's CalWORKS program held a fundraiser to assist homeless students with living expenses.

JULIO FLORES
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Hamburgers and hot dogs were grilling at the patio next to Monarch Hall last Thursday as the CalWORKS program on campus held a fundraiser and canned food drive to benefit homeless Valley College students.

"It's surprising to think we have homeless students," said Alicen Vera, the CalWORKS coordinator. "We really need hotel vouchers for homeless students so they can have a place to stay the night."

The fundraiser was intended

to assist homeless students with their needs such as clothing, gas, grocery cards and finding housing. CalWORKS also helps students with social services obtain needed services.

"We have students who are on the Dean's [and] President's honor list who are sleeping in their cars with their children," said Ellie Rabani, the program's director. "It's been a tight budget this year, so we haven't been able to give jobs to students on campus."

Fred Bustamante, a fire technology student, volunteered to help at the event and is a CalWORKS success story. In 2009, Bustamante was sleeping in his truck with his then 14-year-old son.

"It was really tough on my son during that period," said Bustamante. "I owned a contractor business for 15 years and when the economy hit, many companies that owed me money

filed for bankruptcy or didn't pay, so in turn I couldn't pay my vendors."

Bustamante sold everything he could but was still left with \$250,000 in debt that led to him to become homeless. "I swallowed my pride and asked for help," said Bustamante.

The program gave him an opportunity to go back to school, get good grades through tutoring and make the right career choices. Bustamante will conclude his classes for his degree in fire technology in the fall 2013 semester.

"I understand how hard it is to rebuild your life when you've fallen down," said Bustamante. "That's why I wanted to be here today. Ellie Rabani helped so much to get me back on my feet, and Hector Salazar in the receiving department took me under his wing to get me work."

[See Homeless, Page 2]



JAHSAUDI PERKINS | VALLEY STAR

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - Hector Salazar of the receiving department flipping burgers high in the air at the homeless student fundraiser last Thursday, April 25.

THE VALLEY STAR INFO & STAFF

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STUDENT OVERCOMES STUGGLES, WINS SCHOLARSHIP

Valley College student Spencer Belko received the top award for excellence in speech.

HANNAH POWERS
STAFF WRITER

In March 2010, 17-year-old Spencer Belko woke up to find himself in a trash bag in the trunk of a car being driven by his best friend and a drug dealer. They thought the now Valley College student had died of a heroin overdose and, in a panic, they decided to drive to the desert and bury him.

"I didn't even get sober after that," said Belko. "I kept getting arrested and taken to juvy, and then eventually got put into foster care. It was about a year after that overdose that I became sober. The worst was getting arrested and seeing my mom cry. I couldn't talk to my mom without her crying. She thought I was going to die."

From a heroin addiction to a full scholarship to Eastern Michigan University, Belko competed last week for the Valley speech team in the Phi-rho-pi speech and debate national tournament, bringing the Fellowship

Award to Valley.

After being placed in foster care, Belko was required to attend college. He looked at different schools but decided on Valley where he registered for instructor Duane Smith's Speech 101 class.

"I'm very proud of Spencer," said Smith, who is the speech team coach. "The first three months I had him in my class, he wouldn't do anything. He came to me one day and told me he had prepared a speech and after I heard him, I knew I had to recruit him to be on the team. He then went on to become state champion and now has a full scholarship."

When Belko started Valley he had gone a year without being arrested after he had been put on house arrest for a felony; however, he was still using drugs.

"I knew I could get arrested again if I didn't stop," Belko said. "I became sober by chance. I just decided one day that I would try getting sober, and it worked."

Belko and the speech team hosted and competed in the Phi-rho-pi speech and debate national tournament this month at the Woodland Hills Marriott. There were more than 60 colleges competing and approximately 400 competitors. Spencer received a bronze award in comedy



WINNING - Spencer Belko, a member of the Valley College speech team, holding his Fellowship award he won at the Phi-Rho-Pi Speech and Debate national Tournament last week.

and the Fellowship Award. Belko's fellow participants chose him for one of the competition's top awards.

The speech star will attend Eastern Michigan in the fall and later hopes to become a speech coach.

"When I joined the speech club, I found something I was so passionate about, and it really helped me," Belko said. "Getting the fellowship award has really reinforced sobriety and what it's done for me."

ELECTION COMMITTEE DENIES RECOUNT

The committee declined to conduct a second recount.

JHANELLE RIVERA
CLAIRE BRISLEY
STAFF WRITERS

After presidential candidate Ana Mezhlumyan and running

mate Anoush Alexnyan lost the ASU election on April 18, the pair filed an appeal requesting a second recount.

The appeal was sent to Vice President of Student Services, Florentino Manzano accusing the election committee of racism and demanding another recount. Alexia Johnson and Randi Misrahi were named president and vice president. The appeal did not follow proper procedures and bypassed the committee according to a member of that body.

Commissioner of Political Affairs, Jin Ong released the official results of the ASU elections for academic year 2013-2014 on April 18 and acknowledged the election committee had received an appeal from Mezhlumyan and addressed the accusation of racism.

"We the Election Committee-which of its members consisting of multiple ethnicities, those who [have] backgrounds of Korean, Hispanic and Armenian, worked diligently through multiple meetings within the committee,

campus sheriff's office and college human resources, to provide [a] safe voting environment and to provide both Spanish and Armenian translations to the voters," stated Ong.

Despite the failure to provide a petition with the necessary 30 voters' signatures to receive the original recount, the election committee acted upon her request. Ong and Dr. Elizabeth Ortiz, the ASU adviser, provided a public recount, which showed unchanging results from the original ballots. The Election Committee denied a second recount.

Mezhlumyan and Alexnyan demanded someone other than the election committee verify the ballots. In the letter, the former candidates stated the election committee should be held responsible for the miscalculation.

"We would like to witness a recount by hand and would also like for them to count out loud, so we can keep scores ourselves," wrote Mezhlumyan and Alexnyan. "In addition, we would like to request the voided votes to

be counted as many students were not given clear directions when [they] voted."

When asked how the Election Committee was racist, Mezhlumyan expressed how Ong had made racist comments throughout the election, regarding her ethnicity in running for president.

"He mentioned that it would be a nice change," said Mezhlumyan. "After the last few Presidents had been Armenian."

As a response to the appeal, the committee wrote back to Mezhlumyan and Alexnyan on April 23, explaining a recount had already taken place and that Mezhlumyan had not returned her \$25 deposit receipt, which was mandatory to run as a candidate.

Ong explained he has showed no biased views or racism. "I think I've been so unbiased against the candidate," Ong said. "When she calls me racist when she calls the election committee biased on behalf of her actions, I don't know what to say. Her actions only reflect her judgment."

STUDENTS RECOGNIZE FAVORITE INSTRUCTORS WITH APPLE AWARDS

Valley College recognized three of its instructors with the Apple Awards.

JULIO FLORES
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The Associated Student Union and the Tau Alpha Epsilon honor society celebrated five Valley College instructors at the Apple Awards Monday afternoon in Monarch Hall. Three instructors received Crystal Apple Award, voted on by students, and TAE recognized two more instructors with the Zucker Award for their contributions to the honor society.

Zack Knorr of the philosophy department, Glen Paget of the math department and Carol Bishop of the art department received the Crystal Apple Award, while William Wallis from the English department and Josh Miller from the speech

department received the Zucker Award this year.

"The Apple Awards exist to recognize the hard work and dedication teachers show to us as students and it's our way of giving thanks to them," said Tau Alpha Epsilon President Melanie Hernandez. "Many students feel their teachers have touched their lives in ways that they will never forget."

The Zucker Award, named after Dr. Alfred Zucker, the English department chair and the Tau Alpha Epsilon adviser, was presented to those who have been instrumental in supporting, promoting and donating items and their time to assist TAE.

"William Wallis has been very supportive of our club for years and has been there for us for advice," said Hernandez. "Josh Miller has been there for us in a program that assists underprivileged kids."

Students voted in the weeks leading up to the awards on which instruc-

tors would receive this year's awards. Each student could vote for up to three instructors. More than 300 instructors received votes from all programs and departments. Each nominee received a certificate of appreciation.

Monday's award ceremony opened with a pianist playing as the instructors walked into Monarch Hall, followed by dance club member Noelle Andressen-Kale and guest Kirby Harrell performing a routine.

The program continued with Valley President Sue Carleo and ASU Vice President George Markarian offering congratulations to the honorees.

Zucker Award recipient Wallis spoke on the work of the honor society when accepting his award.

"TAE dedicates itself to the student who desires to transfer to a four-year college and complete a degree in higher education," said Wallis. "They are the professionals of tomorrow."

Homeless

Continued from page 1

According to the Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center, an estimated 254,000 people experience homelessness in Los Angeles County during some part of the year and approximately 82,000 people are

homeless on any given night.

"I volunteered today because I wanted to help this cause," said Salazar.

To make a donation, visit lavcfoundation.org/givenow.php. Under "Special Instructions," indicate "Homeless Students Fund." For more information on CalWORKs, call 818-947-2976.

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GROWING STUDENT DEBT CRISIS DESERVES MORE ATTENTION

Student debt has reached \$1 trillion, second only to mortgages.

CLAIRE BRISLEY
STAFF WRITER

Since 1980, college tuition has tripled at public and private four-year universities and doubled at community colleges, making student loans skyrocket. The average student graduates owing more than \$26,000 with more than 40 percent in deferral status.

According to a recent study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, student debt almost tripled between 2004 and 2012, approaching \$1 trillion nationwide, making it now the second largest form of consumer debt following home mortgages. This is known as the student debt crisis.

With college education being a staple in today's economy, the amount of people attending school and going back to school after being laid off is increasing, resulting in a spike in student debt.

The student debt is rooted back to 1980 when state cuts to higher education began. After gaining support of public colleges and universities that serve about

70 percent of the nation's students, states raised tuition, causing students to borrow more money.

Students who have taken out private loans from banks and federal establishments are forced to pay high interest rates, higher than mortgage or car interest. Student loans typically have an interest rate around 7 percent, and Congress has set unsubsidized loans at a rate of 6.8 percent for students and 7.9 for parents borrowing to send their children to school, depending on their credit.

With high interest rates and little consumer protection, students often have trouble making payments. With little leeway, students find themselves in a situation of default, resulting in collection agencies trying to retrieve the money. For many students, this affects them when they enter the job market, as well as their credit score.

Virtually everyone who applies for a student loan is approved, no matter the likelihood of his or her ability to pay it back, but lenders are not worried because student loans cannot be discharged in bankruptcy. Lenders can get their money back regardless, eventually garnishing

wages, freezing bank accounts or going after personal property like a car or house.

With students graduating and finding themselves in the turmoil of unemployment and debt from receiving an education, the issue of student debt requires serious attention.

Companies are defending students' need for an education while student debt continues to skyrocket. Companies like Student Debt Crisis and Young Invincibles are both on the path to educating students on how to make college affordable and what to do after acquiring debt.

Student Debt Crisis is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to reforming funding for higher education in America. Robert Applebaum founded Forgive Student Loan Debt and collected 32,000 signatures on his petition on the White House's "We the People Site." Shortly after, the Obama Administration revealed the "Pay As You Earn" initiative, which helps keep monthly student loan payments affordable and based on students' income.

This program has helped many people, yet there is still a need for more.

Applebaum's proposal is to provide a one-time bailout of student loan debt as a way to stimulate the economy. He insists that college graduates are the type of people the financial system needs to do things like start businesses, buy homes and cars and spend money. People with debt from school, trying to make a living, are not likely to do those things.

Applebaum states in the petition, "Americans would suddenly have hundreds, or in some cases thousands, of extra dollars in their pockets each and every month with which to spend on ailing sectors of the economy."

Although this sounds high priced, much like bank and auto bailouts, student debt is also a key component affecting modern economic times.

With student loan debt being the only type of consumer debt in America that actually increased during the "Great Recession," and is continuing to increase, it cannot be pushed aside.

To help get student debt under control, a federal student loan repayment system needs to be installed to relieve students from financial burdens after graduating and beginning careers.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

VALLEY'S PREZ EASES ACCREDITATION WORRIES

Dear Campus Community:

Our spring 2013 Accreditation Team visit is over. The team's preliminary findings will be voted on by the ACCJC Commissioners at their June 2013 meeting. The results of this process will be shared with the College community. Regardless of the outcome, our commitment to student success is clearly reflected in our efforts over the past few years. Our actionable improvement plans will serve us well as we move forward together. With our new mission statement and Educational Master Plan as our guide, I know that our students will continue to succeed. We can be proud of the fact that we are fulfilling our community's higher education needs every day.

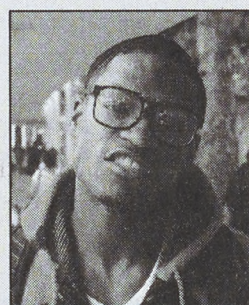
Sincerely,
Susan Carleo, PhD
President, Los Angeles Valley College

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VALLEY VIEW | DO YOU THINK IT IS BENEFICIAL TO GET A STUDENT LOAN?



"Students need emergency budgets when money is not there."

-DUKE MYLES
BROADCASTING



"I wouldn't be able to go to school if it wasn't for student loans!"

-ARUSYAK MELKONYAN
NURSING



"If you look and research the right type of student loan, then it should benefit you."

-JOSE VILCHES
BIOLOGY



"If you can avoid it, then do so because you don't want to start your life in debt. But if it helps to get by faster, then go ahead."

-MARLENE LEONE
MUSIC

PHOTOS BY JAHSAUDI PERKINS AND ERIKA SUPLECOVA | VALLEY STAR

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF AS SYRIAN TERRORISTS ARE POISED TO RISE

Syrian rebels and freedom fighters to future terrorists.

WALEED RAHMAN
STAFF WRITER

Today's rebels, tomorrow's terrorists. What is going on in Syria today or Libya last year does not differ from what happened in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The Taliban went from freedom fighters against the invading Soviets to terrorists to the invading Americans.

"Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it," is a fami-

liar phrase by Edmund Burke, an English statesman and philosophical founder of modern political conservatism. What is not to say 15 years from now when another Bush takes office that we are not invading Syria to bring democracy? We have already spent \$6 trillion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a figure that keeps growing. America is so in debt that it can barely pay its bills.

America has proven it does not have good judgment when it comes to "rebels." We should be sending in United Nations peacekeeping troops. That is their purpose: to protect people, not arm rebels who are not

trained and susceptible to religious brainwashing, which will cause the country more trouble down the road. The U.N. has become no more than America's PR arm, much like BP's commercials showing the good work they have done for New Orleans.

Hundreds of Al-Qaeda operatives are already fighting the war-torn country. Cells from northern Iraq are sending fighters across the Syria-Iraq border, a reverse from a decade ago. Syrian Free Army sources has stated the Syrian opposition is battling Al-Qaeda and other extremist influences. They killed Walid Boustani, an Al-Qaeda fighter, in a town near the

Lebanese border; they also destroyed a cell that raised Al-Qaeda's black flag near the Turkish border in the town of Bab Al-Salameh.

If the U.N. is not going to lead, the United States needs find a way to keep Syrians from becoming terrorists. The world, not just America, needs to be hands on and make sure more sensible elements of the opposition lead and to limit the influx of extremists. We did not do that in Afghanistan in the '80s; we let Pakistan choose which fighters it liked and everyone knows how that turned out. It became a mess this country is still trying to fix.

TSA changes its mind and keeps ban on knives—for now.

WALEED RAHMAN
STAFF WRITER

Common sense finally prevails as the government has decided to maintain the ban of small knives on planes.

Allowing knives on planes is about as stupid as snakes on a plane. It is baffling why the government would even consider it in the first place, especially since Al-Qaeda hijackers were believed to have used box cutters to gain control of four jetliners on 9/11. But John Pistole and his Transportation Security Agency in their wisdom decided the time had come to end that ban.

"A small pocket knife is simply not going to result in the catastrophic failure of an aircraft, and an improvised explosive device will," said TSA Administrator John Pistole. "And, we know from internal covert testing, searching for these items, which will not blow up an aircraft, can distract our officers from focusing on the components of an improvised explosive device."

So long as nothing blows up, it is OK if someone becomes deranged and cuts someone or worse, stabs someone to death. Having knives in a pressurized cramped cabin was and is never a good idea. People are tired,

jet lagged and easily susceptible to emotions. A knife has no place on an airplane unless it is a butter knife.

Pistole is the same man who went on CNN to defend the TSA's invasive pat downs and use of Advance Imaging Technology, which lets workers practically see air travelers naked. His TSA "VIPR" team in Savannah, Georgia, got banned from Amtrak properties by the Amtrak Police chief after the excessive search of passengers disembarking from an Amtrak train. Now, the TSA was going to do a 180 and tell travelers it is OK for them to bring weapons onto planes?

It should not have taken a sizable backlash for them to backtrack on this announced policy, but it did. Flight attendants were among those who spoke out against the change. The Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions, which represents some 90,000 flight attendants, handed out leaflets at airports across the country, encouraging passengers to sign a "No Knives on Planes" petition on the White House website.

Flight attendants should be worried about getting passengers their pretzels and making sure their seat belts are on—not be preoccupied about the potential of knife-wielding maniacs. Passengers do not fly to encounter life and death experiences; they fly because it is supposed to be the safest form of travel.

TRADING WEB SEARCHES WITH GOVT. VIOLATES PRIVACY

"Big Brother" wants to watch browsing habits.

WALEED RAHMAN
STAFF WRITER

Congress is once again attempting to encroach on citizens' privacy. It should spend more time creating jobs and keeping the country solvent while finding a way to stop sequestering and spending less time on what Americans are searching on the web. After a year that saw the Stop Online Piracy Act, Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft

of Intellectual Property Act, the House has decided to pass the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act. CISPA, for short.

This means all of those, "Don't worry, we won't share any of this information with third parties" assurances become null and void. Google, Apple and Facebook, for instance, can give your information to the government. The Electronic Frontier Foundation has stated, "CISPA is written broadly enough to permit your communications service providers to share your emails and text messages with the government or your Cloud storage company could share your stored

files."

CISPA allows for voluntary information sharing between private companies and the government in the "event" of a cyber attack. If the government detects a cyber attack that might take down Facebook or Google, it can notify those companies. At the same time, Facebook or Google could inform the feds if they notice unusual activity on their networks that might suggest a cyber attack. So now, if someone writes something on their Timeline that is conceived by Facebook to be a threat, or if someone searches "hacking" or "pressure cookers" on Google,

those websites can send that information to the government or government-outsourced agencies.

Aside from losing freedom to privacy, and in a way freedom of speech, Americans will lose the freedom to attain knowledge because knowing that you will get in trouble for attempting to look up something will keep you from learning, and that is the biggest act of terror of them all.

Knowledge is power; the less someone knows, the easier they are controlled. If someone is just doing research for a political science class or writing a script for their film class—or even an opinion piece in the college newspaper

about the attacks on Boston—if CISPA is passed, they could face jail time. It has become harder to decipher whether we are living in a democracy or a police state.

Backers claim that CISPA is needed to protect America against cyber attacks from countries like North Korea, China and Iran. However, it would allow companies to easily hand over users' private information to the government. This, according to the Electronic Frontier Foundation, "essentially means CISPA would override the relevant provisions in all other laws—including privacy laws."

This should not come as

a surprise, since it is common knowledge that "Big Brother" gets its jollies from watching what citizens do on the net. Anonymous, Libertarians, and even the president are against the bill; the White House has gone as far as to say, "If the bill, as currently crafted, were presented to the president, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill."

But that does not mean it will not pass once the wheels have been greased and some backdoor deal has been made. The Pilgrims on the Mayflower came to America to get away from tyranny. They were lucky; we are not

THE STUDENT TRIPPER

THIRD ANNUAL POOR MAN S COACHELLA

Brokechella music and art festival is what Coachella once was.

RACHEL PARSONS

It's 90 degrees in Indio. The blistering sun is baking people during Coachella's second weekend. It's dusty, dirty and dry. People are soaked with sweat, crusty with the desert valley's grime. They've paid \$349 plus travel expenses to journey many arduous hours to a small town in the middle of nowhere and stand in lines, crowds and more lines. Suckers.

It's a pleasant 77 degrees in Downtown Los Angeles and I am definitely on the wrong side of the tracks. Literally; practically under the 6th St bridge east of the railroad tracks along the canal known as the L.A. River. I've trekked for many peaceful minutes to the eastern end of the arts district—the still heavily industrial side—to the \$10-a-ticket third annual Brokechella music and art festival. It bills itself as “a fest for the rest of us.”

As my search for the nearest bar to the entrance pulls me into Six01 Studio, a sponsor and artists' work space housing one of three stages, a DJ screams, “I'm stoked I'm here and not at f'ing Coachella!” And the crowd screams back.

These are my people, united as we are in our mutual broke-ness. Screw those people with cash out in the desert. Here, there's an air of pride in the notion that we are collectively flipping the world-famous music festival the bird.

Even the musicians echo the sentiment. “... The fact that I'm here makes me have no such desire to go to Coachella,” King Washington drummer Lucas Ventura tells me after the band's tight, polished set. “Because tonight, it's about the local party. Bringing Coachella to L.A. You don't have to drive five hours down—”

“And spend 5 million dollars,” adds Billy Lee, KW's bassist. They finish each other's sentences often, working like a good rhythm section should.

“Yeah and spend five million dollars, exactly,” Ventura says.

But the duo has more symbiotic thoughts on the subject. “Coachella's hit critical mass—”

“And it's more about the social aspect than it is about the music,” Lee is cut off again as Ventura finishes the rather apt statement.

But the Brokechella lineup is about the music. There are a very respectful 39 acts in the lineup for the one-day party. Nearly all are L.A.-based bands, rappers and DJs. And these are no amateurs. Truth be told, bands like King Washington and Body Parts have renewed my faith in Los Angeles musicians over the course of the

evening.

These are not groups that want to take the fastest route to making the crappiest—but most lucrative—pop song, geared to the corporate music machine just to get rich quick. Both bands perform some of the most well-written, slick, complex and meticulously rehearsed music I've heard in a long time. The craftsmanship shows in the melodic three-part harmonies and complicated arrangements; in both cases. Maybe I just have a thing for three-part harmony.

As I wander out to the hip-hop stage I'm wondering if I'm too old to be here. I'm a 30-something and I had some qualms about coming and feeling completely out of place with a bunch of cheap 21-year-olds. But I'm not the eldest here, by far.

It's an eclectic group, and a calm one, if the LAPD detail assigned to the event is any indication. They look like they're about to doze off, trying to keep an eye on the hipsters, gangstas, hippies and even a couple yuppies happily blending in with no trouble.

“The crowd is really receptive, really nice,” says Alina Cutrono, guitarist and singer for Body Parts. “I'm impressed at the scale [of it].”

“And there's space,” says founder of the band Ryder Bach. “There's like, people, but it doesn't feel crowded.”

He's right. I can't tell there are 2,000 people milling about in the singleblock party zone. The weather is beautiful, the music and art is fantastic and the beer is cheap. I even run into friends I didn't know were coming. The whole thing is so well put-together I can't help but wish no one else would ever hear of it. It can be my special secret. Well, along with my 2,000 friends. But that's it—no more.

Problem is, it is worth coming to. So it will get bigger, no question. Looking at the turnout tonight I'm wondering whether Brokechella will morph into the outsized, high-priced behemoth that is Coachella. Attendance has already doubled year-to-year. More than doubled this year, actually, from 950 people in 2012 to about 2,100. It's taken over the street in front of Six01 Studio for the first time, and added another stage.

But it's not for me to worry about. Tonight is about discovering and enjoying some high-end music for a low-end price. Which makes me feel smart, not broke. And I'm not covered in dirt by the time I get home.

For more information on Brokechella visit www.brokechella.com.

To find out more about King Washington visit <http://kingwashingtonmusic.com/> for info on their residency at Silver Lake Lounge, every Monday in May.

For more on Body Parts visit <http://bodypartsband.com/>.

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PHOTO BY JUSTIN BAKER

ARBOR DAY FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS



RECYCLED - Michael Cottrich explains his paper mâché art entry for Valley College's Arbor Day Festival, this past Friday, to an admirer.

JOHN STRUBE | VALLEY STAR

Valley College is 2012 Tree Campus USA recipient for the second year in a row.

BRITTANY BAGWELL
STAFF WRITER

The spirit of conservation was enthusiastically embraced Friday at Valley College's Arbor Day Festival. Around 100 people attended the event presented by the ASU and Eco-Advocates club. The day featured live entertainment, a tree-scavenger hunt and a recycled art display.

“It's great so many people came out for Arbor Day,” Valley student Tyler Silverio said. “The students here are really about making campus a place we can all be proud of.”

Friday's festivities came soon after Valley College was recognized as a 2012 Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for the second-straight year. Last year, Valley was the first California community college to earn that distinction. Tree Campus USA is a national program that encourages colleges and universities to celebrate and nurture trees.

Emilie Traub, president of the Eco-Advocates club, was host of the event. Tau Alpha Epsilon President

Melanie Hernandez started the entertainment by playing a song on the guitar with a breezy light style that complemented the informal mood of the festival.

Audubon Society members displayed dangers of plastic in the environment by showing photographs of decomposing sea birds with the shiny plastic pieces in their stomachs, reminding people that recycling is a better option.

The recycled art featured two particularly amusing odes to trees. One display showed a tree made of cigarettes and cigarette packs, which was aptly called the “cancer tree.” The other display looked like

a birch tree from far away. On closer inspection, the tree was made of plaster with a design that read, “this is not a tree” in tiny type.

Mary Montes of the California Native Plant Society handed out guidebooks to help hikers identify flowers and plants on scenic trails. Montes encouraged Valley students to support the environment because it keeps Monarch butterflies alive.

“Support native plants because they support native species,” she said. “You know the Monarchs: no Milkweed no Monarchs.” Referring to the migrating butterflies that are dependant on the Milkweed to reproduce.

AVENUE Q DEPICTS LIFE AFTER COLLEGE THROUGH PUPPETEERING AND HUMOR

“Avenue Q's” characters proved relatable and humorous to audiences.

BRITTANY BAGWELL
STAFF WRITER

A play with puppet-esque monsters and naughty musical numbers? Yes, please.

“Avenue Q” is an anti-politically correct musical that deals with sensitive subjects like racism, sex and homosexuality. The use of puppets to tackle topics people often shy away from was done with masterful humor and wit. People were doubled over with cathartic laughter as the actors boldly sang about subjects that would make most people blush.

The plot is driven by the male puppet Princeton, puppeteered and voiced by Rene Zamora-Quinonez, and his search for purpose after college. The opening number, “What Do You Do With a B.A. in English?” ultimately led the protagonist to the play's namesake, “Avenue Q.”

Princeton moves to a dumpy apartment building on “Avenue Q” which houses a dysfunctional group of people and monsters who are trying to scrape together a living in the midst of their own personal problems.

The superintendent of the “Avenue Q” building is former child star Gary Coleman, performed by Mary-Eudiah Onyango, whose real-life story plays well with that of his disenfranchised tenants.

Julia May Wong plays a

Japanese immigrant named Christmas Eve whose inability to pronounce words with the letter “I” in them is an ongoing gag in the show. Her accent scored giggles from the audience which climaxed during her musical number “The More You Ruv Someone.” The laughter could not be contained.

“The Internet is for Porn” was the hit of the night, which had the audience howling with delight at its toe-tapping catchiness. The number sees Trekkie Monster, portrayed by Brian Jackson, educate the audience on

the only real use for the Internet.

“Avenue Q” won three Tony Awards, including Best Musical,

“The Internet is for Porn” was my favorite song.

-Alex Han
Psychology major

after it opened in 2003. The show at Valley was presented through a special arrangement with Music Theatre International.

Many Valley students came out to take advantage of the show's discounted \$10 ticket price on Friday and Saturday night. Psychology major Alex Han thoroughly enjoyed the performance.

“The Internet is for Porn” was my favorite song,” Han said.

The play has surprises, romance, and through it all an overriding positive message of perseverance through the strife and misfortune life throws at everyone in some form or another. There will be two more performances on May 3 and 4 at the Mainstage Theater.



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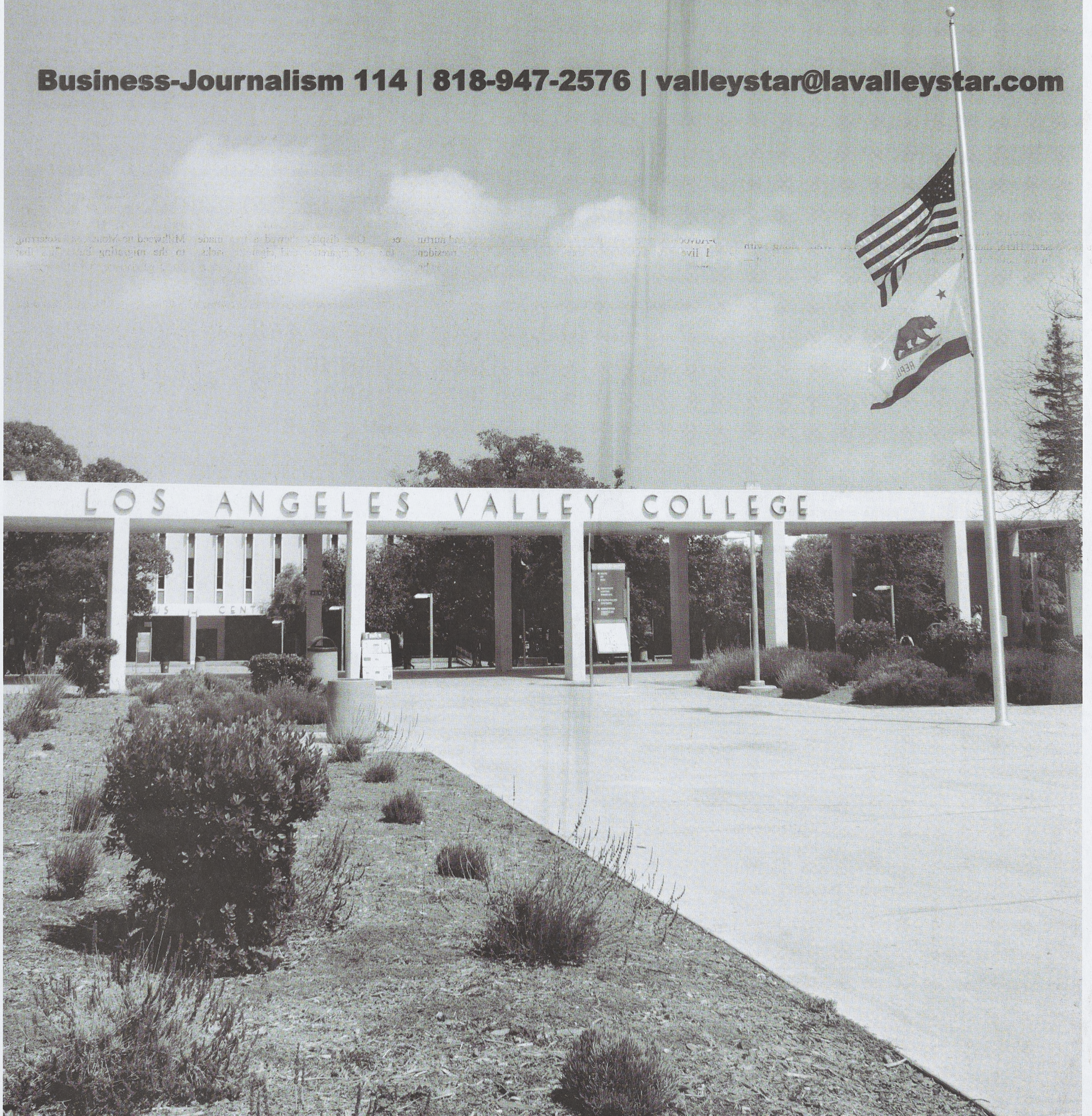
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MONARCHS TRACK AND FIELD COACHES HOPE TO DO WELL IN STATE CHAMPIONSHIP PRE-LIMS

ANALYZE THIS LAKERS AND DWIGHT NEED TO PART WAYS FOR NEXT SEASON



EXPRESS YOURSELF - The Monarchs track and field team showing off their lighter side during practice last week.

ERIKA SUPLECOVA | VALLEY STAR

The Valley College track and field teams hopes to excel in state championship.

GEORGE BELON
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The Valley College men's and women's track and field teams are getting ready for the California State Championship this week.

"Qualifying for the state championship [made] it a successful season—not a phenomenal one, but successful," said Valley's head coach Francois Wolman.

Valley track and field did not have many athletes competing in the Western Conference Championship last week, but many competitors advanced to

the State Championship.

Head coach of the women's Valley track and field team, Yannick Allain, thinks that this season of misfortune and injuries can be reversed with success in the state championship.

"This has been a season of mixed results to say the least," Allain said. "But with dedication and hard work, we can do good ... if we put in the work."

Allain and Wolman both express a lot of confidence in their athletes.

"If we can execute and run to do the best of our quality, I do believe it's possible [to win]," Allain said. "There is a lot of potential in the group, but potential is only potential unless you work on it."

Both coaches think that there must be more drive and dedication within the team to make everyone improve as teams and individuals.

Freshman sprinter Jarrod Paschal wants to inspire his teammates to do just that.

"The team must be more competitive with each other so we can grow," He said.

Allain and Wolman both think their programs will need to work hard to get back to their consistent performance of excellence.

"Everyone works together," said sophomore distance runner Jordan Bricker. "Some people may believe that there are groups—sprinters are in their group and vaulters are in theirs—but in reality we are all one big family."

The qualifying athletes with compete in the state preliminaries May 4, those who advance to the finals will compete May 11 and the championship will take place in San Mateo May 17 and 18.

LADY MONARCHS SOFTBALL TO PLAY AND PRACTICE OFF CAMPUS NEXT SEMESTER

Valley College will build a new four-level parking structure where the softball field is located.

HANNAH POWERS
STAFF WRITER

The Valley College Lady Monarchs softball team will be practicing and playing offcampus for the 2014 season, as a new parking structure is scheduled to be constructed this summer where the current softball field is located.

"We will be on an off-campus facility for the 2014 season," said Frankie Garcia, the current softball coach at Valley. "But practice will not be interrupted. We're flexible, positive and we will work hard wherever and whenever we practice."

Valley will be building two new softball fields where parking Lot F is currently located.

There will also be a running track accessible to the community that will loop around the athletic fields to help promote fitness and wellbeing.

The two new fields have a

“This will not be a struggle for the team. We have a solid program and that will remain the case”

-Francisco Garcia
Softball Coach

projected cost of approximately \$8 million from the current \$630-million revitalization project, according to Valley's current Master Plan.

"This is all possible because Measure J passed in 2008," said Valley College President Sue Carleo. "That doubled our budget, so we got to revise our mas-

ter plan, and now we're now able to do so much more."

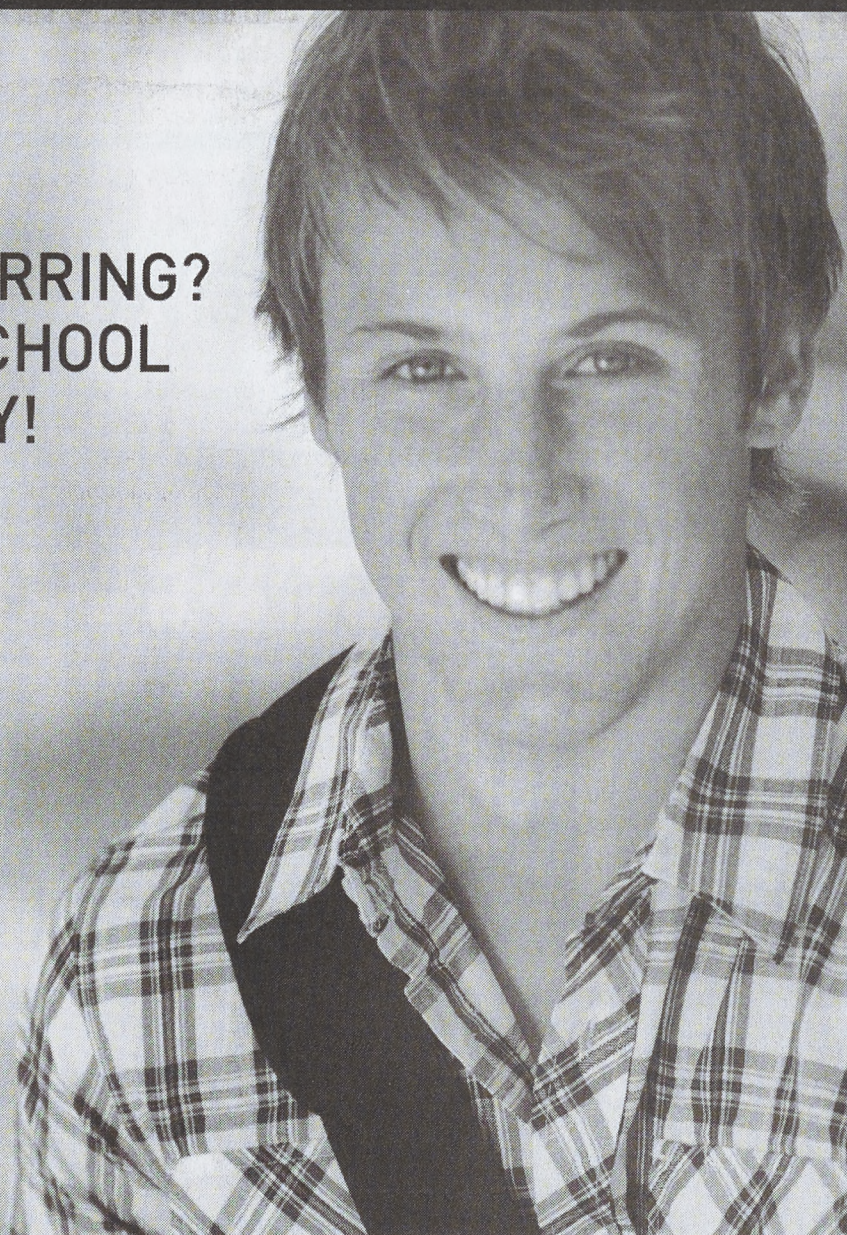
The new four-level parking structure will have more than 1,000 parking spots and will also include charging stations for electric and hybrid vehicles with access from Ethel Avenue as well as Emelita Street.

The parking structure is scheduled to be completed in January 2014, and due to the shortage of parking at Valley, the construction of the new softball field cannot start until the structure has been completed. This means construction on the field will begin January 2014. It is scheduled to be completed by October 2014.

"This will not be a struggle for the team," said coach Garcia. "We have a solid program and that will remain the case. Upon completion, we will return to a phenomenal state-of-the-art athletic baseball/softball complex—definitely worth a season or two off campus."

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